1991

The issue of money, the issue of class :

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THE ISSUE OF MONEY, THE ISSUE OF CLASS: NO LAUGHING MATTER IN THE SHOEMAKER'S HOLIDAY

by

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A Thesis
Presented to the Graduate Committee
of Lehigh University
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Arts
in
English

Lehigh University
May, 1991

This thesis is accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts.

May 7, 1991

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Abstract

The Shoemaker's Holiday (1599) by Thomas Dekker is one of the earliest of the city comedies--plays that are set in Elizabethan and Jacobean London and depict the life of "substantial merchants, small shopkeepers, impoverished gentlemen, adventurers and entrepreneurs" (Horwich 255). This play tells the story of the jovial master shoemaker Simon Eyre as he rises in fortune and fame to become Lord Mayor. It also tells the love stories of two young couples. In one, a nobleman disguises himself as a Dutch shoemaker to win the hand of his sweetheart. In the other, an apprentice shoemaker returns from war just in time to rescue his wife from marrying another man, since she thinks her soldier husband is dead.

Critics have traditionally considered The Shoemaker's Holiday a congenial, even sentimental piece, distinct from the more biting, critical humor of the later city comedies. I disagree, however, and believe this play presents a picture of the socioeconomic and political conflicts of the period that make it a precursor to the more obviously satrical works, rather than an anomaly.

The robust cheerfulness of Simon Eyre, the romance of young love, and even the community feasting at the end of the play do not hide the tensions of class struggles and commercial competition. The ambition of the capitalist shoemaker, the powerlessness of the conscripted soldier,

the vulnerability of women who are viewed as objects of commerce--all are present in this "congenial" drama.

My discussion focuses on the foundation The Shoemaker's Holiday has in the earlier, folk tradition of festivity that encouraged community solidarity and the reaffirmation of traditional values. It also, however, identifies the play's similarities to later, more openly critical works: Dekker's The Honest Whore (1604), John Marston's The Dutch Courtesan (1605), Ben Jonson's Epicoene (1609), Thomas Middleton's A Chaste Maid in Cheapside (1614).

The Shoemaker's Holiday stands with other plays in revealing social dilemmas. It is a credit to Dekker's skill as a dramatist that this play, while appearing to be a simple "entertainment," actually touches on issues such as war, poverty, capitalism, authority, and male/female relationships.

Introduction

The Epistle's description is a fair one, for The Shoemaker's Holiday is a genial and light-hearted comedy, a well-made entertainment seeking neither to instruct nor to reform us (Palmer xi).

> Through the fraternal love of Eyre's workshop, marital love is restored and romantic love rewarded. And to the feast of conviviality, of fraternal love, at the end of the play, all are welcomed (Smallwood and Wells 39).

Traditionally, Thomas Dekker's The Shoemaker's Holiday (1599), has been regarded as a comedy which provides a "merrie" look at life in Elizabethan London. As jovial Simon Eyre has pranced across the page--and stage--declaring "I am a handicraftsman, yet my heart is without craft" (V.v.10),[1] to some he has seemed the embodiment of "the proper combination of the mirthful and the mercantile spirit" (Smallwood and Wells 40). And, the play itself has been regarded as a celebration of social harmony that Simon's cheerfulness and fellowship seem to engender.

The Tudor period, however, offered people sufficient moments for despair and disharmony. Even living under a stable government Tudor society was in the throes of change that affected the economic, social and even religious aspects of people's lives. Walter Cohen views drama as a provider of ideological resolutions to societal

ills. Cohen's assertion that ideology functions most evidently "when a plot ends in reconciliation and joy, as in comedy," (187) prompts us to look again at The Shoemaker's Holiday in the context of the realities of the Elizabethan world: a society which held tremendous class distinctions, struggled with a new, commerical competition, and was ruled by a monarchy intent on keeping all elements of society balanced in order to maximize its own power.

Horwich notes that "substantial merchants, small shopkeepers, impoverished gentlemen, adventureres and entrepreneurs are portrayed with some realism in city comedies and almost nowhere else" (255) in the drama of the period. In looking at Dekker's drama in the context of socioeconomic realities of the age, we will see the darker side of everyday life, played however, in a comedic tone that diffuses the seriousness--and the threat of social change.

The Shoemaker's Holiday presents not only an atmosphere of good cheer, but ends with a festival that brings commoners, aristocrats and monarch together in a reaffirmation of a traditional world. Applying Cohen's view that "as a rule the festive side of a play is inversely proportional to both the social seriousness of the subject and the prominence of other, potentially antagonistic classes," (190) then The Shoemaker's Holiday is serious drama, indeed. No great social barriers are destroyed in this play, but enough rumblings are heard to enable the modern reader to recognize the social complexities this comedy seemingly simplifies.

By looking at the historic beginnings of city comedy, by examining the political, economic and social aspects of

Tudor society, and by comparing The Shoemaker's Holiday to subsequent city comedies, the underlying function of Dekker's words will become apparent: tasting reality without choking on its bitterness.

The festive origins of city comedy

We can find the beginnings of city comedy in the medieval festivals of feudal Britain. Joyce Youings credits the resiliency of the English in weathering the great social changes of the Tudor period partially to their being a people who "in its essentials had retained its dominant late-medieval characteristics" (384). One of these characteristics can be identified as the folk tradition of early theater. As the early English theater developed from the peasant festivals celebrating nature, and from didactic morality plays, a sense of community solidarity and reaffirmation of traditional values--two elements found in city comedy--also arose. This is not to say that city comedy is simply a continuation of an ancient folk tradition that included clowns and Morris dancing, but it does recognize that the same element of festive, community spirit is in Tudor comedy, and it promotes the same political objective: to create social cohesion.

As Robert Weiman observes, the topsy-turveydom and festive release of medieval pagents provided a communal consciousness and some social criticism (24). No real social change occurred as a result of any festival but, for a time, there was a suspension of reality from the routine of daily life. People engaged in the fantasy of a new reality created by the pageant. This pageant "reality" helped diffuse the hopelessness of people's

lives. By resembling real life, the pageant held up the possibilities of change, that someday life might be like the pageant's "society."

The medieval village youth who would rule as "Bishop" for the festival day was accepted by the community as a part of the festival's ability to create a new reality. In the same way, in later, written drama, the clown character could perform his antics and mouth his memorized asides to the audience, pulling them into the reality of the play. And therefore, even later, the Tudor audience could accept the antics of Simon Eyre and his apprentices as reality during the time of the play's performance.

As Leah Marcus notes, Marx and Bakhtin both identified the subversiveness of popular festivals, Marx arguing that the critique of authority historically hastened class conflict. She states that Bakhtin, however, holds the "more problematic position that festival forms are completely separate from the offical culture," and that this view gives limited attention to the motives of an "official elite" that seems willing to suspend its authority. Marcus's "own bias" is to accept that the pageant's "seemingly lawless topsy-turvydom can both undermine and reinforce--it can constitute a process of adjustment within a perpetuation of order; the precise balancing of the two functions depends on local and particular factors and creates different effects at different places and times" (7). Acknowledging that people enjoy celebrating, therefore, is not as important as noting what and how they celebrate.

In addition, we must take into consideration people's attitudes after celebration as they return to the reality of every day life. It is not hard to imagine the feudal

peasantry returning to the fields, refreshed and invigorated after the activities of a festival--even the memories of the celebration would provide conversation in the following months.[2] In the same way, it can be imagined that people left the early morality plays, not dejected by man's propensity for sin, but with their fears of damnation allayed by having been shown how to live a life that would lead to salvation. In these instances, which resulted in a sense of communal well-being, there was no attempt to question the social order--either the authority of the lord of the manor or of the church. Fests and drama that resolve questions without openly asking them have the ability, therefore, to control which questions are asked.

We need only to examine Elizabeth I's creation of the holiday of Ascension Day to recognize the value she perceived in controlling society through merriment. As Marcus notes, Elizabeth declared a holiday to celebrate the annual anniversary of her ascension to the throne (4). Time was given to sporting events and general merriment, but divine worship was also part of the festivities--joining the humanistic with the holy. In granting her subjects an occasion to put aside their daily routine, she was, in fact, asserting her authority over them. Likewise, the people who so willingly participated in the merriment were reaffirming Elizabeth's authority by honoring the date it began. For the great majority of the population, Elizabeth's holiday resolved the issue of rightful ascendency not by debate, but by simple affirmation.

Recognizing then, how the elements of ancient festive control were still functioning politically in Tudor

society, we can turn to The Shoemaker's Holiday and find specific instances of the same controlling forces at work. We need not go farther than the title of the play to see how the play attempts to "approach" the audience. The word "holiday" promises a festive time in watching this play, yet the plot could have as easily been titled The Rise of Simon Eyre. The shoemakers only gain a holiday in order to celebrate their master's economic and social successes, yet the title emphasizes the communal gain, not the individual's elevation that the plot reveals. Moving from the title to the play's last scenes, it is obvious that the public dinner affirms Simon's authority over his men and temporarily over the citizens of London, although no common Londoners had any actual hand in selecting him their mayor. An even higher authority, the monarch's presence, sanctions Simon's rise and blesses the event. And true to his capitalistic nature, Simon uses the occasion to seek special trading days for his "honor" and "the good of his brethern" apprentices. This appeal for the communal good set in an atmosphere of communal celebration deflects attention from the fact that it is Simon, first and foremost, who will benefit by his "mad knaves" producing more for extra selling days.

In looking at the character of Simon we can also see elements of the more ancient clown figure. To be sure, Simon is not a fool, but his constant good cheer, especially when contrasted with his actions, points to Simon's character as functioning to create goodwill within the audience. He is not the cruel, ambitious taskmaster that probably existed in the lives of many of the working class audience, but he is a new reality of the master

whose joviality and exuberance, while a mite foolish, are still endearing.

To be sure, The Shoemaker's Holiday is a far cry from a rustic drama presented on a village green. What can be here concluded, however, is that in order to resolve contemporary issues, Dekker's play uses a structure which affirmed traditional social unity.

Life in the shoemakers' city

Based in a traditional form of festivity, The Shoemaker's Holiday is still very much a comedy of its time. We need only look at the socioeconomic and political environment in Tudor England to find the bitterness of real life in this light-hearted play. In addition, by looking at a another Dekker work, The Honest Whore, (1604) and later city comedies--The Dutch Courtesan (1605) by John Marston, Epicoene (1609) by Ben Jonson, and A Chaste Maid in Cheapside (1613) by Thomas Middleton--it will become apparent that The Shoemaker's Holiday is not an anomaly but a precursor to later, more obviously satirical city comedies. A challenge to Leggatt's view that "it would, however, be misleading to suggest that there is any serious social thinking in these love match comedies" (80), The Shoemaker's Holiday stands with the other plays in revealing many societal dilemmas. It is a credit to Dekker's skill as a dramatist that the play, while appearing to be a simple "entertainment," actually touches on issues such as war, poverty, capitalism, authority, and male/female relationships.

The link between the rise of the city and the rise of the theater in Elizabethan England is a close one. As London grew from the increased business conducted by the merchant class, commercialism touched many aspects of city life. The size of the population and the income of citizens could support a public theater. As Weiman points out,

Richard Burbage built his theater in order to make a profit, not for the common good (170). And even earlier, the acting profession had become linked to the new economic times as vagabonds, made homeless by the ravages of the plague and the enclosure laws, took up lives as traveling actors, eventually settling in London (53). As the development of the public theater was tied to a new commericialism, so city comedies reflected the environment in which this money was made. Paster notes that London was the only English city at that time of a size to show the tensions between individual aspirations and the social order. Life in London itself, therefore, became subject matter for drama as it wrestled with the two Renaissance views of the city: ideal community or predatory trap (6). The irony of a money making enterprise like a theater dramatizing people who devise money making enterprises is just one example of the ambiguities of Tudor life.

Dekker shows us the two views of city life through his characters. The ideal community is expressed in the portrait of Simon Eyre as the prosperous, ambitious tradesman. He and his men contribute to the welfare of the state by being successful at their trade: their shoes sell. Simon's entrepreneurial spirit provides work for Ralph, Firk, Hodge and the others, and his enterprise provides food and lodgings in an extended family atmosphere.

But we can agree with Paster that, "competition makes class solidarity a mere illusion" (155) if we see that the foundation of Simon's extended family was hard work and knowing one's place. His joviality toward his men is based in his exhortation "To work, my fine knave, to work." His grumblings that "They wallow in the fat brewis

of my bounty, and/ lick the crumbs of my table, yet will not rise to see my/walks cleansed," (I.iv.2-4) is a clear indication that Simon expects a return on his "bounty." As a result, Jane, whose status as an apprentice's wife makes her part of the "family" but no real contributor to the shop's income, can be cast out of the household on some vague charge of growing "more stately than became her." Margery's additional comment of "ka me, ka thee" (III.ii.86), as Breight notes, emphasizes that in Simon's household, relationship with the apprentices was an exchange of "goods": the master's protection for the income one generated.

The city as predatory trap is apparent in Jane's situation when she leaves Simon's household to fend for herself, or stated in terms of the ideal, to work for herself. In reality, she must enter the fray of competitors to earn her living as best as she can. With no family for support or protection, she is sexually vulnerable and must, on her own, deal with Hammon's, or any other man's, advances. Honest work failing, prostitution could be her final entrepreneurial experience.

Ralph's devastation on hearing of Jane's disappearance is understandable, then, when we consider the callousness of city life and the real possibility of losing one's self in the large population of London, the city being ten times larger than any other town in the country by the end of Elizabeth's reign (Roberts 306). Ralph must depend on Hodge's friend's sighting of Jane as the only hope of finding her again. In much the same way, Jane's only information about Ralph is through a letter Hammon receives from a friend which inaccurately lists Ralph among the war dead. To rely on the accuracy of a letter

which contains "Their names that have been slain in every fight," (IV.i.86) seems ludicrous until we remember the general lack of swift, accurate communication in the age. It is not difficult to imagine other "Janes" who made life-defining decisions based on inaccurate or inadequate information.

Even with Hodge's cheerful assurances that "one told me, he saw her a while ago, very brave/ and neat. We'll ferret her out,and London hold her" (III.ii.102-3), there is no indication later that Ralph and the men ever actively look for Jane, the task being overwhelming. The fantasy of Ralph's locating Jane through the shoes he made for her before leaving for the war is not just a sentimental touch, therefore, but also can indicate the kind of luck that was actually needed to find someone. Margery's dismissive comments on Ralph's shocking loss,

> And so as I said: but, Ralph, why dost thou weep? Thou
> knowest that naked we came out of our mother's womb, and
> naked we must return, and therefore, thank God for all
> things. (III.ii.96-9)

reveal that an underlying profit motive, not friendship, ran the Eyre household. For the nameless and powerless, city life could literally swallow up an existence.

Though the city was the center of the new commericalism and capitalistic fervor, Dekker's comedy also exposes social tensions that existed nationwide: class struggles, the position of women and issues of political authority. Simon Eyre is a Londoner and his trade flourishes there, but he could have made shoes anywhere in the kingdom. His wealth comes from a product

he produces, not from speculation or from some service he performs.

His fortunes change, however, and he becomes truly wealthy through the young nobleman, Lacy's, loan, which enables him to buy into a Dutch merchant ship cargo. According to Mortenson, Simon's chance to buy the Dutch cargo was available because of political intrigue which made the cargo uncollectable. As Hodge says,

> The truth is, Firk, that the merchant owner of the ship
> dares not show his head, and therefore this skipper that
> deals for him, for the love he bears to Hans, offers my
> master Eyre a bargain in the commodities.
> (II.iii.16-19)

Thus, Simon's wealth springs from another person's downfall (247). As Tudor society struggled with the emergence of a wealthy merchant class, it is conceivable that various members of the audience perceived Simon's good fortune in different ways. To some it might have represented the moral deterioration implicit in business dealings, and to others, simply, the reality of negative and positive elements always ready to determine life's situations. Roberts comments that the Elizabethan view of the world contained a Platonic dualism in which "the spiritual continually interpenetrated the material and there were a thousand correspondences between the two" (311). The question of making money without losing one's soul was already a dilemma for the ambitious. As Leggatt points out, Simon's ego and ambitions are played down by presenting his wife, Margery, as the one who acquires new airs with new wealth, and Simon as the doer of good works in providing a public banquet (16). The fact that he doesn't criticize his wife's behavior and that he uses the

banquet to further his own ends gives us another view of this successful man. But with the emphasis on Simon's benevolence, budding Tudor capitalists could be reassured, that as Simon had shown, there was a way to follow the enticing path of individual ambition without becoming caught in the trap of damnation.

Simon's newly attained wealth promotes his social rise, ultimately, to the position of Lord Mayor--something he gained not from his hard work, but from good fortune. But another interesting point is that the "good fortune" initially came from the beneficence of the nobleman Lacy, in the form of a loan and business advice. Simon, then, in reality wouldn't have been able to catapult himself to such a status, and Lacy's role here seems to reaffirm to the Tudor audience that the nobility still paternalistically directs the lives of the commoners for their own good. As mentioned earlier in regards to a powerless majority, this play, if titled The Rise of Simon Eyre, would also have been viewed with certain unease by the aristocracy. Simon's ambition and shrewdness carry him only so far; a nobleman ultimately guarantees his rise.

As a master, Simon himself maintains a paternalistic relationship with his apprentices. He looks after both his men's welfare and their work output. As a result, he can prod, "To work my fine/ knave, to work! Wash thy face and thou'lt be more blest" (I.iv.14-15), and at the next moment scold his wife, Margery, with "Is't seven o'clock and my/ men's breakfast not ready?" (I.iv.119-20). Simon also emphasizes another bond--- that of masculinity--- with his apprentices when he addresses Margery and rants, "Quarrel not with me and my men, with me and my fine

Firk:/ I'll firk you, if you do" (II.iii.40-1). Simon's ultimate show of benevolence to the apprentices is the feast he provides for them at the end of the play--in honor of his own ascendency. During the time of jollity and food and drink, he thinks to ask the king for the favor of two market days for the leather trade. Simon, who has been acknowledged by the monarch for his "cheerfulness," is also politic: what better time to ask for a favor "for the honor" of his trade?

Simon's apprentices also maintain a subtle class distinction between themselves and their master. They have a limited power of their own and streaks of independence which they show occasionally. In a capitalistic society these men were supposedly at liberty to sell their labor and could be considered free citizens, but in reality, the strict system of guilds and city companies determined their livelihood and lives. There were 12 great city companies at this time in London, each company formed from an association of various trades. These companies enforced apprentice regulations, regulated markets, determined quality standards and formed beneficial societies (Roberts 311). With such a structure, no worker could actually sell his labor independently.

Their lives limited by their class and the economic system, some of the apprentices' jokes and actions have a subversive quality. At the beginning of the play, when Ralph is to be conscripted, his friends do not hesitate to speak up to the officers for his release: Hodge says,

> Why, then you were as good be a corporal as a colonel, if
> you cannot discharge one good fellow; and I tell you true
> I think you do more than you can answer, to

press a man
within a year and a day of his marriage.
(I.i.150-53)

And near the end of the play, when Ralph and the apprentices rescue Jane from marriage to Hammon, all the shoemakers cry, "Villians? Down with them! Cry clubs for prentices!" (V.ii.30). In both instances, these workers have not hesitated to speak up for their beliefs, even though, short of using "clubs" they have no real power over the aristocrats they are addressing. In fact, in both situations, money and class are the real elements of power: Lacy will give his allowance to Askew as a means of avoiding his own departure for war; and Hammon's attempt to bribe Ralph to get Jane is thinkable because of Ralph's limited income.

This sense of limited power is present in the apprentices' relationship to their master, Simon. They threaten to quit if Simon won't hire the "Dutch" shoemaker, Lacy, even though Simon has declared, "Peace, Firk. A hard world: Let him pass, let him vanish!/ We have a journeyman enow" (I.iv.50-1). Their strength is in their numbers, and being threatened with his workers' leaving, Simon is forced to concede,

Tarry, my fine Hodge, my brisk foreman!
Stay, Firk!
Peace, pudding-broth! By the Lord of Ludgate,
I love my
men as my life. Peace, you gallimaufry!
Hodge, if he want
work, I'll hire him. (I.iv.68-71)

While Simon's change of heart is presented in a humorous way, it is not difficult to see that while Simon may love his men as his life, he also loves his business.

Upon becoming Lord Mayor, Simon's relationship with his apprentices changes. While they are proud of him, in

reality, he has moved another step above them in social rank. Simon, therefore, naturally turns to share his honor with Margery, his consort now, not with his fellows. We are presented, in this situation, with another example of the complexities of Tudor life: the conflicts between the belief in male supremacy and the social demands of respecting the master's wife. Firk may very well have a cheeky, running commentary on Margery that "If she take me down, I'll take her up! Yea, and take her/ down, too, a button-hole lower!" (II.iii.34-5), but ultimately, he must show her the respect that Simon's positions as master shoemaker and Lord Mayor demand. Firk's humorous comments continue, but their humor is contained within a subversive "aside" after a respectful comment, such as "O rare! Your Excellence is full of eloquence! (Aside.) How/ like a new cart-wheel my dame speaks, and she looks like an/ old musty ale-bottle going to scalding" (III.ii.9-11). This kind of comment might be humorous in the battle of the sexes, but it is also the voice of frustration commenting on an authority that cannot openly be challenged.

The paternalistic attitude with which Simon regards his men is used by the monarch in dealing with Simon. At the end of the play, we learn that the king wants to meet the new Lord Mayor. But this interest is in regards to Simon's cheerful attitude, not for his skill as a shoemaker. The "product" that is most highly valued is Simon's being "One of the merriest madcaps" (V.iii.2) in the land.

It is not hard to grasp the irony of this scene when one realizes that in reality, the Tudor crown greatly valued--and needed--the commercial success of men like Simon Eyre. Roberts describes the Tudor ideal of

government as "a financially independent crown ruling in partnership with the nobility and gentry" (316). Given the class distinctions demanded by the society, however, this partnership could never have been considered a union of equals, but more a coalition of the crown and the aristocracy to use the resources of the gentry. The crown needed to encourage commerical enterprise, but never at the expense of destroying the class structure. Again, one has only to look to adroit Elizabeth's court, to see this policy implemented. As Youings states, the ranks of government service during Elizabeth's reign were mostly filled with the sons of gentlemen, who, in contrast to the nobility's young, were rather well educated. These commoners held a certain amount of power in the government, but ultimately their power was limited by their class status. While the queen promoted within governmental posts, she did not promote social ascent, and created virtually no new members of the nobility (333). Apparently, even this firm hold on class distinctions was not enough for the aristocracy to feel secure, as the Essex Rebellion in 1601 perhaps proved, when seven young earls joined with Essex, not to rebel against the queen but against the commoner Robert Cecil, in order to "make the court a better place for aristocracy" (Youings 333). The partnership was equal,therefore, only in its common goals: to preserve order, protect property and defend the realm (Roberts 297).

The rank of gentleman does not belong to Simon Eyre by the end of the play, yet neither does the rank of simple tradesman. Simon has become socially mobile, and it is not difficult to imagine that the slightest indications of the breakdown of class distinctions would have touched a

highly sensitive issue for an aristocratic audience. It is not surprising, therefore, that the king does not ask about, nor commend, Simon's success as a businessman, for that might grant Simon higher esteem than proper for his class position. The king seeks no business advice, but rather, "Nay, I pray thee, good Lord Mayor, be even as merry/ As if thou wert among thy shoemakers:/ It does me good to see thee in this humor" (V.v.13-15). The patronizing attitude of the king does not seem out of place in this traditional, festive scene, but as Thomson notes, since the attitude rewards social cooperation, rather than providing social advancement, it also keeps class distinctions clear and unquestioned (169).

In looking at another of Dekker's works, The Honest Whore, we find the same patronizing attitude by the monarchy towards a successful businessman. Set in Milan (which could as easily have been London, given this play's obvious Tudor social tensions), we meet the wealthy linen-draper, Candido. Selling a product that is not of his own making he functions somewhat differently in the business world than Simon. Since Candido acts as both buyer--from the weaver--and seller--to the customer--his success depends on his ability to compromise and successfully strike deals. While Simon's outstanding virtue is his cheerfulness, Candido's is his extreme patience. This trait is exasperating to both his wife, Viola, and his apprentices, and results in her committing him to the Bethlem Monasterie for lunatics. She says of Candido:

> No losse of goods can increase in him a wrinckle, no crabbed
> language make his countenance sowre, the stubburnnes of no
> seruant shake him, he haz no more gall in him than a Doue, no

more sting than an Ant... (I.ii.70-3)

Candido's behavior with the young aristocrats who visit his shop clearly reveals his approach to business: the customer is always right. Mocking him, the young men press for more and more outrageous conditions of the sale of a penny's worth of lawne until Candido willingly concedes and cuts the expensive cloth in the middle of the bolt in the exact size of a penny, presenting it with, "Looke you Gentleman, theres your ware, I thank you,/ I haue your money heare; pray know my shop,/ Pray let me haue your custome" (I.v.99-101). As with Simon Eyre, two tensions of Tudor life seem to be presented in this scene. On one hand, Candido can be viewed as a most astute businessman for making the sale, or his fawning behavior can be seen as the humiliation he accepts as the high cost of doing business.

As England moved into world markets, the crown emphasized the value of compromise which resulted in increased trade, and the value the ruling Duke of Milan places on patience in The Honest Whore gives a strong indication of the Tudor crown's interest. Candido's patience is even more valued than Simon's cheerfulness, since his patience not only wins over his wife, Viola, but offers the Duke, and all citizens of Milan, a way to approach life. The Duke's invitation to Candido to "Come therefore you shall teach our court to shine,/ So calme a spirit is worth a golden Mine..." (V.ii.514-15), echoes the call for social cooperation earlier heard at the shoemakers' banquet.

In Middleton's A Chaste Maid in Cheapside we can see how in just a little over a decade the scene of festive resolution--complete with guildhall and dinner--has taken

on a degree of baseness. In this comedy the goldsmith Yellowhammer and his wife Maudlin have shamelessly tried to marry off their daughter and son for social advancement. Their efforts have been defeated by their daughter's true love for a commoner and by their son's stupidity, but nevertheless, both children are to be married at the end of the play. Yellowhammer, seemingly chastised, in the true spirit of festivity, invites all the "kind gallants" and neighbors assembled to a wedding feast, "the dinner kept in Goldsmiths' Hall." Unlike Dekker's two plays, there is no monarch figure to give his blessing to the proceedings, but perhaps at a wedding, which is a family event after all, a father's blessing will do. And so, interrupting his son's obscene comments about his new wife, Yellowhammer declares, "So fortune seldom deals two marriages/ With one hand, and both lucky: the best is,/ One feast will serve them both.." (V.iv.122-4). Yellowhammer's miserly comments remind the audience that money, and only money, has been the focus of this tradesman's life. Rather than calling for national unity or social cooperation, Middleton uses all the traditional elements of a happy ending to emphasize the ignoble behavior which has gone on earlier: the buying and selling of sex and the scheming for social advancement.

In The Shoemaker's Holiday the impact of war reveals another serious example of class distinction and economic power, specifically shown through the sufferings of Ralph and Jane. As commoners of the serving class, they are socially insignificant. But Dekker leaves no doubt as to their love for each other and the pain Ralph's conscription will cause them both. Jane pleads to the officers, "O let him stay, else I shall be undone," and as Ralph accepts his

fate, he gives his "loving lovely Jane" shoes he has made her, saying," Wear them, my dear Jane, for thy husband's sake,/ And every morning, when thou pull'st them on,/ Remember me, and pray for my return" (I.i.237-9).

As Ralph leaves for war, we are aware that his superior officer, Lacy, also hates to leave his own Rose. Lacy, however, has money to buy himself more time in London by assuring Askew's cooperation in taking their troops on without him. Even though Lacy intends to conduct "some serious business for three days" (I.i.100) only, Askew's willingness to go on even to Normandy without him, in effect, allows Lacy to desert. The discrepancy between Ralph and Lacy's positions in society is even more apparent when we note that Simon has also offered to buy Ralph out of his conscription by providing "boots these seven years" to Lacy and Askew. Lacy's answer, "Truly, my friends, it lies not in my power," (I.i.147) may be true for Ralph's request, but Lacy does have a power, based in wealth, that gives him a control over his own life that is unavailable to Ralph.

The Shoemaker's Holiday begins and ends under a cloud of war--interesting, at the very least, for such a "merrie" play. It is a war whose immediate consequences are far removed from everyone except the very poorest classes. Lacy, whose class and officer's rank put him in the position to command others, has the possibility of experiencing adventure and even glory through war. Even so, we learn he has no plans to join his troops in Normandy but intends to hide in London and battle for the hand of Rose. Simon will not face the enemy nor even feel a decrease in his trade. He will be left short one apprentice, but it cannot be felt as a great loss since

later Firk and the others have to threaten mutiny to convince him to hire the disguised Lacy as a replacement for Ralph. Only Ralph and Jane, with the least influence on the social scale, will actually live the bitterness of war, first in separation and then lastingly, in Ralph's maiming.

By the play's end, when both Ralph and Lacy's futures seem happily settled with their loving wives, the king reminds the merrymakers to enjoy themselves while they can, since there is to be another call to arms. It is not only Simon, then, who uses the festivity for ulterior aims. Appearing to have gained as much as his revered presence has bestowed, the monarch thanks his "Friends of the Gentle Craft...for our cheer." But as he puts an end to the appearence of social unity and leaves with his lords to "revel it at home," his call is for nationalism and allegiance. Implying there is no help for it, he declares that "When all our sports and banquetings are done,/ Wars must right wrongs which Frenchmen have begun" (V.v.194-5). Certainly there could have been many "Ralphs" in the Tudor audience, other men, who as commoners had been vulnerable to nations' politics and bullets and who returned home maimed. Hearing these words, they knew that once again, it would be the "Ralphs," not the "Lacys" that would be fodder for cannon.

What Dekker has not openly addressed, however, is the true impact of war on the common man. Ralph, according to his friends, is one of the lucky returnees; his wounds will not prevent him from earning his livelihood, for as Hodge says, "Thou shalt never see/ a shoemaker want bread, though he have but three fingers/ on a hand" (III.ii.79-81). As Breight points out, however, the real luck is that

Ralph has survived "considering the absymal quality of medical treatment in the field." The fact that Ralph's wound is inconsequential to his earning his living is similar to his finding Jane through her shoes: a happy resolution is presented without challenging the situation. Ralph, seeming to agree with his "good" fortune, says "since I want limbs and lands,/ I'll trust to God, my good friends, and to these my hands" (III.ii.108-9). Yet he also acknowledges his class limits: lack of land. Since Lacy's and other aristocrats' wealth comes from owning land and not from their skilled labor, losing an eye or leg would not result in their being threatened by poverty upon their return home.

Youings points out that by the late 1590's wounded soldiers had swelled the ranks of the poor (270)--ranks which reflected the social, political and even religious turmoil in Tudor life. The plague left homes without breadwinners, and inflation, such as resulted from the disastrous harvests between 1594-1597, pushed more households to the edge of poverty. The Reformation had not only broken the absolute authority of the Catholic Church but had also eliminated the Church's role as caretaker of the poor. The rise of the individual in Protestant England did not engender a national sense of social commitment to the poor as even almshouses were established by the wealthy as a means to obtain personal salvation (260). It was this socioeconomic environment to which every weary soldier returned. [3]

And in the same way, Jane, fending for herself and dismissed by Margery, has no manor house in which to wait for Ralph's return. Without the support of her husband she must earn her own bread, something which Hammon, the

aristocrat, cannot take seriously. His plea of "Good sweet, leave work a litle while; let's play" is answered by Jane's realistic, "I cannot live by keeping holiday," which Hammon easily resolves with, "I'll pay you for the time which shall be lost" (IV.i.30-2). Offering to pay for Jane's time certainly has a ring of procurement to it; Hammon sees Jane's "product" not as the goods she sells but as her self.

Even earlier, Hammon's first reference to Jane is after he has been rejected by Rose and, in an aside, says,

> There is a wench keeps shop in the Old
> 'Change:
> To her will I; it is not wealth I seek;
> I have enough, and will prefer her love
> Before the world. (III.i.51-4)

In a society whose class distinctions were so rigid, Hammon's loving Jane must be viewed with suspicion. Jane would be more susceptible to his attentions, perhaps, because of her difficult life, but Hammon finds she resists his advances, and he succeeds only when she believes Ralph is dead. When Ralph unexpectedly appears, Jane is overjoyed and Hammon's only appeal is that Jane not "break her faith" with him. Hammon quickly realizes his situation--and only influence--and offers Ralph money for Jane. Whatever romantic illusions we still hold about Hammon's love are shattered in this scene at the church door. Mortenson's point is well taken, that while Hammon's offer might seem crass, it still is not out of place, since everything else in the play has been bargained for (251).

But there is more than bargaining taking place even though Hammon says, "Mark what I offer thee: here in fair gold/Is twenty pound, I'll give it for thy Jane./ If this content thee not, thou shalt have more" (V.ii.78-80). Present is the additional class distinction that gives

Hammon, an aristocrat, the freedom to extend such an offensive offer in the first place. When earlier rejected by Rose, he offered no price to win Rose over. Money doesn't hold such power to an already wealthy household, and Hammon acknowledges his defeat when declaring he wants no "enforced love." Hammon knows that Jane has not encouraged him (so much for repudiating enforced love) and that "thy Jane" belongs to Ralph, so it is the class difference--and Hammon's wealth--that allows him to openly try to buy his "love." Ralph challenges this class prejudice when he answers, "Hammon, dost thou think a shoemaker/ is so base to be a bawd to his own wife for commodity?" (V.ii.84-5). This is obviously what Hammon does think, but his apology and ultimate gift of the money take the sordidness out of this scene--if we can believe the vow of such a fickle young man, "Since I have failed of her, during my life/ I vow no woman else shall be my wife" (V.ii.93-4). Again, such total moral conversion and self-denial seem to be offering another "happy ending" to gild a serious social issue.

Jane's vulnerability to abandonment and whoredom, real as it was, is only alluded to in this comedy. The aspects that threaten Jane's existence are dealt with more openly in later comedies, as Leggatt notes, sex being a prevalent topic discussed through the characters of whores and episodes of adultery (9). Being a married woman and "belonging" to Ralph, Jane is not free to sell herself. Hammon knows this when he appeals to Ralph, not Jane, at the church door. Hammon must negotiate with the person in possession of what he wants to buy. The negotiations over Jane's body and selfhood proclaim her sister to women who more openly were commercial goods in Tudor England.

In The Honest Whore, the sale of Bellafront's favors to aristocrats involves the morals of the buyer and seller and the perception of marriage as hinted at in Dekker's earlier work. As modern readers, we are interested in the sudden "reform" that Bellafront undertakes after Hipolito's condemnation of her life. There have been no indications up to this point in the play that Bellafront agonizes over the morality of her actions. She does not walk the streets, selling herself to any passer-by for a few pence, but is, in fact, a quite successful businesswoman, who can pick and choose among the nobles who seek her favors. The young nobleman Hipolito's words, "You haue no soule,/ That makes you wey so light: heuens treasure bought it,/ And halfe a crowne hath sold it:" (II.i.322-24), cause Bellafront great remorse and begin her reformation. Hipolito does not say these words, however, to his own friend, Matheo, the person who first bought Bellafront's body and soul. Instead, in his eyes, Bellafront is solely responsible for her fallen state.

There is a vindication of sorts for Bellafront in that eventually Matheo is forced to marry her. Her loss of virginity is forgiven, therefore, through a later marriage. But having reformed and then been rejected by Hipolito, whom she really loves, Bellafront "bargains" for a marriage, any marriage, as she once bargained for her body. As Horwich notes, she approaches marriage in a business-like spirit (263), wanting recompense for the loss of her "very rich iewell, calde a Maidenhead..." (V.ii.410-11). When Bellafront confronts Matheo to right his wrongs by marrying her, Matheo retorts, "How, marry a Punck, a Cockatrice, a Harlot? marry/ foh, Ile be burnt thorow the nose first" (III.iii.116-17).

While this forced marriage lends itself to the play's fantasy that the honest whore lives happily ever after, the reality for Bellafront is that her husband claims no responsibility for her past. Regarding the marriage, Matheo calculates that his willingness "To take a common wench, and make her good" (V.ii.446) rather than be cuckolded by a virgin bride is, after all, to his advantage.
Bellafront's value to Matheo is not that he can address a wrong he's done, but that by accepting "damaged goods" he at least avoids the risk of unfaithfulness later. In fact, in this last bargain for the socially sanctioned marriage bed, Bellafront has sold her soul as much as in her whoredom, except that in this transaction she is committed for life, not for one night.

In Marston's The Dutch Courtesan we are presented with another "successful" whore, Franceschina, who is abandoned by her noble lover, Lionel Freevill when he decides that he is madly in love and will marry the young noble woman Beatrice. Freevill approves of whoredom saying, "Every man must follow/ his trade, and every woman her occupation" (I.i.94-5) and sees the value in brothels for even married men: young rogues will leave one's wife alone if they can find pleasure in a brothel, and the unfortunately married man can find solace for his sad choice in a whore's arms.

Freevill finds it appropriate--and humorous--to pass Franceschina on to his timid, unhappy friend, Malheureux, to teach him the joys of passion--something that Malheureux feels himself to be above. The comedy begins as Malheureux becomes "passion's slave" and, in order to win Franceschina's favors, is faced with carrying out her revenge on Freevill.

The theme of the revengeful whore is not unusual in drama of this time, but if we look more closely at this play we see that it is from a sense of abandonment, not hurt pride or vanity, that Franceschina seeks to hurt Freevill. Franceschina has every reason to believe, albeit mistakenly, that there is true affection between her and Freevill. Even when visiting her, after already having made up his mind to throw her over, Freevill admits to Malheureux, "I lov'd her with my/heart until my soul showed me the imperfection of my/body, and placed my affection on a lawful love, my modest Beatrice.." (I.ii.89-91). These are strange words of conversion from a man who has just passionately kissed Franceschina, has apparently visited her while courting the "modest" Beatrice, and who believes in the many values of the brothel.

Franceschina, shocked upon hearing from her procuress, old Mary Faugh, that "...your love is to be married, true; he does cast you off, right;/ he will leave you to the world--what then?" (II.ii.2-3) is not consoled by Mary's reminder that she's had many other men and others will yet "entertain" her. Her emotions in this scene range from casting blame on Mary for introducing her to Freevill, to pathetic begging, "Nay, good naunt, you'll help me to anoder love, vill you not?" (II.ii.22). As Franceschina rants and raves at Mary she is actually trying to deal with her own sense of betrayal and fears for the future. Her accusations of "Foutra 'pon you, vitch, bawd, polecat! Paugh! did you not/ praise Freevill to mine love?" (II.ii.33-4) turn to lamentations of "Vat sall become of mine poor flesh now? Mine body must turn Turk for a twopence..." and, finally, to "Ick sall be reveng'd!" (II.ii.39-41).

Franceschina, the professional whore, should be content with "turning Turk," but she knows the degradation of selling herself to every available buyer in order to insure her existence. There is a strong sense of revulsion for her former way of life in Franceschina's words which emphasizes that she and Freevill had a stable relationship. Perhaps Franceschina should even be grateful then, that Freevill has provided Malheureux to take his place. Society expects her to want nothing more than a man to fill her bed. But it is Franceschina's sense of emotional betrayal and her refusal to play along with society's expectations that determine the plot of this play. When, at the end, her revenge is thwarted and, among all the characters who have betrayed each other, she alone is punished, Franceschina learns that her body, not her soul, is her only valued commodity in society.

We can again turn to Middleton's A Chaste Maid in Cheapside to see an extremely blatant presentation of women as commodities: both daughters and wives being openly offered for money. Yellowhammer eagerly tries to arrange a match between his daughter, Moll, and Sir Walter Whorehound, whose baseness is aptly described by his name. Moll is being given in exchange for Sir Walter's title, for the wealthy goldsmith realizes his money promotes him only so far up the social ladder. Yellowhammer's ambition drives him to ignore both his daughter's feelings and his future son-in-law's character.

Moll's first words on meeting Sir Walter are "O death" (I.i.114) and later, when she is discovered on the point of marrying her true love, Touchwood Junior, Yellowhammer furiously vows, "I will lock up this baggage,/As carefully as my gold; she shall see as little sun /If a close room

or so can keep her from the light on't" (III.i.50-2). Moll's maidenhead is as precious to him as is the other raw commodity in which he deals: as he hammers gold into profitable jewelry, so he intends to fashion his child's virginity into a profitable return of status.

Yellowhammer's base graspings are truly revealed when he learns that Sir Walter has a mistress whom he has kept for 10 years and by whom he has several children. Initially hearing of Sir Walter's private life, the goldsmith declares, "I'll mark him for a knave and villain for't,/A thousand thanks and blessings, I have done with him" (IV.i.255-6). A few lines later, he obviously rethinks his rash judgment, saying:

> Well grant all this, say now his deeds are black,
> Pray what serves marriage, but to call him back;
> I have kept a whore myself, and had a bastard...
> The knight is rich, he shall be my son-in-law,
> No matter so the whore he keeps be wholesome,
> My daughter takes no hurt then, so let them wed,
> I'll have him sweat well e'er they go to bed.
> (IV.i.270-2,277-80).

Any protection Moll could claim from her father is buried by his rationalizing beliefs that "men will be men" in their whoring and that if the whore is "wholesome" in health she can do no harm to Moll.

In contrast to Bellafront or Franceschina, Mistress Allwit, Sir Walter's kept woman, is not the focus of this play; rather her husband, who is also being kept by Whorehound, is its focus. Allwit, like Ralph, has been offered money for his wife by the aristocracy. The fact that he is such a willing seller in this commercial exchange and relishes its benefits is characteristic of

Middleton's presentation of society's extremes. Nevertheless, the issues of class privilege are the same as in The Shoemaker's Holiday. In sharp contrast to Ralph's indignant response to Hammon, Allwit exults that his wife is Sir Walter's whore, declaring:

> I thank him, h'as maintained my house this ten years,
> Not only keeps my wife, but a keeps me,
> And all my family; I am at his table,
> He gets me all my children, and pays the nurse,
> Monthly, or weekly, puts me to nothing,
> Rent, nor church duties, not so much as the scavenger:
> The happiest state that ever man was born to. (I.ii.16-22)

Not only is Allwit's role as husband pure pretense; his role as citizen is just as much a sham. Ralph, facing a real threat of poverty, rejected Hammon's offer and kept his self-respect; Allwit has received Sir Walter's money and made his wife his trade, saying of himself, "...'tis his living;/ As other trades thrive, butchers by selling flesh,/Poulters by venting conies, or the like coz" (IV.i.239-241). His position as a respectable member of society--as husband, father, church goer, householder--is all based his sale of his wife.

It is important to note, that while there seems to be some affection between Mistress Allwit and Sir Walter, and he even takes a fatherly interest in the education of the sons he's sired, Allwit is not totally supplanted. Just as Hammon tried to bribe Jane's "owner," and not Jane herself, so must Sir Walter negotiate with Allwit, not his wife. In this play the negotiation has an on-going aspect in that Allwit is part of the household. Mistress Allwit is something to be negotiated for over and over, as we see Whorehound accuse Allwit, "Yet, by your leave, I heard you

were once offering to go to/ bed to her" (I.ii.105-6). Within the irony of a man being accused of trying to bed his own wife, we should not miss the fact that Mistress Allwit is not confronted with the same accusation; it is only the proprietors who wrangle over the merchandise, and Mistress Allwit owns nothing.

In contrast to the union of Ralph and Jane The Shoemaker's Holiday also presents an upper class portrait of ideal love in the romance of Lacy and Rose. True love, purity and sacrifices are offered as the basis of this marriage, yet the undercurrent of the not-so-ideal realities of Elizabethan life is also present. The noble Lacy deserts the call of his country and king for love, and it is his wealth that provides the means to avoid his duty. When faced with his treachery, the king chooses to pardon Lacy, even elevating his rank, and excuses the young man's actions since "'Twas not a base want of true valor's fire/ That held him out of France, but love's desire" (V.v.56-7). Thomson notes that not wanting to "offend Love's laws," the king puts aside the laws of the land and the laws of social order for the noble man (175). One can only wonder if the king's benevolence would have extended to Ralph if he had also hidden from his martial duties.

Another class struggle is played out in this relationship in the disapproval of the two lovers' families. Neither wants his child to marry the other's because they each think the marriage would be beneath their own family's status. The wealthy Lord Mayor, confident in his earned wealth and rank, looks upon Lacy as a dissipated young man and says, "...Rowland might do well,/ Now he hath learned an occupation./ (Aside) And yet

I scorn to call him son-in-law" (I.i.42-4). And just as strongly, Lincoln warns Lacy about Rose's low status, "I would not have you cast an amorous eye/ Upon so mean a project as the love/ Of a gay, wanton, painted citizen" (I.i.75-7).

Yet, as Thomson points out, the reality of the age was that the English did marry across class lines, and that both classes realized something in the union: money for the aristocracy and titles for the commoners (174). The wealthy were not immune to rising inflation; "the increasing cost of everything which contributed to the aristocratic lifestyle was the real drain" (Youings 331).

Jonson's Epicoene, while not dealing with marriage across class lines, does indicate the reality of the limited power of a title without money. As Morose, "a gentleman who loves no noise," rejoices that he has found a perfect--silent--woman to be his wife, he exults that now, with the possibility of his siring an heir, he has prevented his nephew from inheriting. The inheritance Morose will protect is not one of title but of money, as he declares, "This night I will get an heir and thrust him out of my blood like a stranger. He would be knighted, forsooth, and thought by that means to reign over me; his title must do it" (II.v.). Morose goes on to mock the value of his nephew Dauphine's knighthood, listing the places in London, from taverns to widows' beds where it will serve him for nothing. Dauphine's knighthood "shall not have money to discharge one tavern reckoning, to invite the old creditors to forbear it knighthood, or the new, that should be, to trust it knighthood," but ultimately, the "last fortune to it knighthood shall be to

make Doll Tearsheet or Kate Common a lady; and so, it knighthood may eat" (II.v).

As Roberts points out, the rise of the gentry didn't result in the decline of the aristocracy, many of whom had lands to sell, fields to enclose, mines to dig and rents to raise (299). But for those noble families who did not have such resources, marriage was a way to infuse new wealth into ancient titles. Marriages of this kind moved society out of the feudal age, but their capacity to provide social advancement jarred the established order. It is not difficult, therefore, to see the advantage in representing Lacy and Rose's marriage in the romantic context of "love conquers all," and in including the monarch's blessing: the social disruption caused by the crossing of class lines could be diminished when given another focus.

Hipolito's love in The Honest Whore is also portrayed as ideal. He fights the efforts of Infelice's family to stop the marriage, not because of class distinctions, but because of family rivalries, as Infelice's father, the Duke, admits,

> ...I must confesse,
> Hipolito is nobly borne; a man,
> Did not mine eniemies blood boile in his veines,
> Whom I would court to be my sonne in law?
> But Princes whose high spleenes for empery swell
> Are not with easie arte made paralell.
> (I.iii.26-31)

With strong foreshadowing of Romeo and Juliet, the couple is secretly helped by a priest, and the families are reconciled through the youngsters' pure love.

And yet, as Horwich notes, Hipolito, like Lacy, is not entirely honorable. He is the instigator of Bellafront's conversion and rejection of her old life--her secure life.

However, when she professes her sincere love for him, Hipolito shows no compassion and is unyielding in his superior attitude (263). His total commitment to the supposedly dead Infelice is touching, but it does not excuse his haughty answer to Bellafront's grief that she should "Stay and take Phisicke for it, read this booke,/ Aske counsell of this head whats to be done" (IV.i.172-3). No matter how much Bellafront has changed, she is still not worthy to marry Hipolito, whose character could only love one as unblemished as Infelice. Matheo, a rogue of sorts, is the partner for the reformed whore. Bellafront, like Lord Mayor Simon Eyre, realistically can be socially elevated only within certain limits.

In the same way, the gentleman Freevill's love of modest Beatrice supplants the Dutch courtesan with no regard for Franceschina's feelings. Just as Lacy and Hipolito use their status to absolve themselves of responsibility to others, so Freevill uses a status-sanctioned authority and morality to manipulate. Freevill's class and money allow him to resolve his abandonment of Franceschina by simply passing her on to another of his rank, something she should appreciate. He then decides to teach Malheureux a lesson about giving way to unbridled passion by letting his friend be suspected of murder. Meanwhile, this noble lover allows his innocent Beatrice to suffer, grief-stricken over his supposed death, revealing himself, finally, with the apology, "Only I presum'd to try your faith too much,/ For which I am most agrieved" (V.ii.56-7). At first glance this apology might seem sincere and adequate to the circumstances of a trick getting out of hand. But, knowing that Beatrice never gave Freevill cause to doubt her love, it becomes

apparent that he has simply used the opportunity of his rumored death to test Beatrice. Since the supposed murder was a trick planned between Freevill and Malheureux to trap Franceschina, there was no practical reason for not informing Beatrice. To prove her faithfulness, Beatrice has had to suffer through her own lover's deceit.

In the same way that Lacy is excused by the king, we have Freevill's own class vindicating his actions. While Crispinella, Beatrice's sister scolds him, Beatrice, the one hurt, rejoices with "Do you then live? And are not untrue?/ Let me not die with joy! Pleasure's more extreme/ Than grief; there's nothing sweet to man but mean" (V.ii.66-8). And in the same way, Malheureux, tricked almost to the gallows by his friend, gratefully concedes,

> I am myself. How long was't ere I could
> Persuade my passion to grow calm to you!
> Rich sense makes good bad language, and a friend
> Should weigh no action, but the action's end.
> (V.iii.61-4)

It is only Franceschina who maintains her condemnation of Freevill--but then, her opinion counts for nothing.

The Shoemaker's Holiday reflects other aspects of class and economics through Simon and Margery's bourgeois marriage. They have formed not only an emotional union, but a sort of business partnership, as well. Their marriage is based on affection and a joined sense of purpose in their future.

While Simon is clearly master of the shop, when he is gone Margery easily steps in to continue giving orders to the apprentices. The fact that Simon speaks roughly to Margery and orders her around just as much as he does the apprentices shows his traditional role as husband. Margery accepts her position, also, (often as the shrewish wife) but

she has no hesitation to elevate her status to taskmaster to keep the shop in good order. Frick's jibing comments to Margery are not so different from those he addresses to Simon, and, contradictory as they seem, are examples of attitudes of male superiority mixed with his cheekiness in addressing "betters," who include Margery.

Besides being Simon's "junior" business partner, Margery is his social partner and acquires status as "lady mayoress" as Simon advances. Her desire for the trappings of the upper classes by seeking for a French hood maker is, as Breight points out, galling in light of the "Four thousand English" that were reported killed by the French. She reacts with snobbishness when the news is announced that Simon is made sheriff and she has become "Mistress Shrieve." Firk mocks Margery's sovereign-like distribution of coins at the good news with, "'Tis but three halfpence, I think. Yes, 'tis threepence, I/ smell the rose" (III.ii.127-8). Thomson notes that Margery's actions represent the threat felt by aristocrats from the middle-class. New wealth and sharp wits could purchase high rank in administrative posts for the bourgeoise, affording them more opportunities to cross social lines--and act as nobles (168). It is interesting that it is a lower class apprentice, here benefiting from Margery's pretensions, who scolds her for not keeping her social place, his low class mockery masking the aristocracy's fear of her upward mobility.

Margery's postions as woman, wife, helpmate and social consort all seem to contradict each other at one time or another and reflect the complexities of her bourgeois marriage. As a woman and wife she can be rudely treated, but as a business helpmate she must be respected. As a

social consort, her status is elevated along with her husband's, even though he may continue to show her disrespect. Her status is more secure than Jane's, but nevertheless, it is a result of her marriage.

A more unhappy business partnership is found in Candido and Viola's marriage in The Honest Whore. Traditional spousal roles are also represented but reversed in the sense that Viola wishes to be dominated by her husband, feeling he is inadequate as a man because of his patience. It is his patience, not his anger, that frustrates her into becoming a shrew. The role reversal continues in the running of the business, with Viola instead of Candido chiding the apprentices with, "You mumble, do you mumble? I would your maister or I/ could be a note more angry: for two patient folks in a house/ spolye all the seruants that euer shall come vner them" (I.v.5-7).

When the nobles have begun their sport with Candido in asking him for a penny's worth of lawne, it is Viola who confronts them with, "I, that patience makes a foole of you: Gentlemen, you might/ ha found some other Citizen to haue make a kind gull on, besides/ my husband...Customers with a murren: call you these customers?" (I.v.89-95).

Candido's apprentices have a more complicated relationship with Viola than do the shoemaker apprentices with Margery. They share Viola's anger and frustration at Candido's mild-mannered approach to life, yet they defend their master's honor when Viola's brother pretends to be her lover to make Candido jealous. The apprentices beat the brother Fustigo, thereby not only vindicating their master's apparent cuckoldry but their own honor as men.

Finally, after Viola's frustrations drive her to commit Candido to an insane asylum, social order is restored when Viola begins to regret her plotting. When she cries to the apprentice George, his chiding comment, "This longing has made you come short of/ many a good thing that you might haue had from my Maister" (V.i.52-3), is another indication that things have begun to change in the household. His male smugness to help Viola "learn her lesson," is a departure from their shared frustrations with Candido, and is indicative of the contradictions in husband/wife and servant/mistress relationships. This topsy-turvy marriage is righted, finally, when Viola asks Candido's forgiveness and promising, "ile vex your spirit no more" (V.ii.478). As a chastised wife she accepts his patience--and, therefore, his domination.

In Epicoene, marriage is held up to Jonson's sardonic wit, but it, nevertheless, contains the same elements of commercialism as The Shoemaker's Holiday. Morose, a man who hates noise in any form, is so desperate to protect his estate, that he is willing to consider marriage so he can produce an heir. Seeking silence rather than companionship, and fertility, rather than affection, his decision to marry is nothing more than a display of shrewd investment strategy. It is also understood that Epicoene, a poor widow, looks on the financial security that marriage to Morose will bring as her own investment in the future.

The integrity of Morose's motivations are never really questioned; instead the play focuses on the trickery and the impossiblity of his attaining a "silent" marriage: his bride, who agrees never to speak, is actually a boy sent by the nephew, and after their "marriage" her

acquaintances overrun his house and sanity. In desperation, Morose promises the inheritance to his nephew if he will rid him of his wife, only to find out, after giving the promise, that the marriage was fraudulent in the first place.

Besides the commerical aspects of Morose's marriage, a social aspect is also revealed that is similar to Simon and Margery's union. In determining the suitablity of his future bride, Morose questions her as to how she would conduct herself while living with him. There are the more obvious questions, asking if she can answer him "with silent gestures," if she can refrain from conversing in order "to seem learned, to seem judicious," if, in fact, she can bury herself "with silence." Morose's final question, however, reveals his concern for his wife's dress, for it will be through her display as consort that his social status will be perceived. Pleased up to this point with her assent to silence, Morose says, "But hear me, fair lady: I do also love to see her whom I shall choose for my heifer to be the first and principal in all fashions, precede all the dames at court by a fortnight..." Morose then wonders, "And how will you be able, lady, with this frugality of speech, to give the manifold but necessary intructions, for that bodice, these sleeves, those skirts...(II.v)? Her simple answer, "I leave it to wisdom and you, sir" confirms his domination and his choice in this "Admirable creature" (II.v). Just like Margery, Epicoene--though a boy--understands women's dual roles as consort and subject in marriage.

The vintner Mulligrub and his wife represent bourgeois marriage in The Dutch Courtesan. In running a tavern they work side by side creating business success similar to

Simon Eyre's. The vintner is wealthy and rising in the world "to be one of the Common Council shortly" (II.iii.78). While Simon's windfall in buying the Dutch cargo is downplayed, Mulligrub's profits from foreign products and his ambitions are openly criticized. At his trial on trumped up charges of stealing a cloak, Mulligrub is accused of offering not the "true ancient British" drinks of "good ale, perrys, braggets, ciders," but of providing his customers the "juice of the whore of Babylon," having imported "Popish wines, Spanish wines, French wines" (V.iii.104-7). As Wine notes, the play is mocking Mulligrub's hypocrisy as a Puritan in importing Italian and, therefore, "Popish" wines, but "the real charge is that this hypocrisy is damaging to the national economy" (Marston 108).

As the butt of jokes and tricks of Cocledemoy, "a knavishly witty city companion," Mulligrub's ambitions and pretensions are held up to ridicule. Mulligrub, thinking he is being shaved by a simple, young barber, who actually is Cocledemoy in disguise, urges the lad to tell him the news of court and "How do all my good lords and all my good ladies and all the rest of my acquaintance?" Cocledemoy's aside, "What an arrogant knave's this! I'll acquaintance ye!" (II.iii.33-35) launches yet another ruse against the vintner.

In the same way, Mistress Mulligrub's pride in status and her education make her vulnerable to Cocledemoy's mischief. Pleased with her ability to use high sounding expressions, she boasts,

> ...Thus 'tis to have good education and to be brought up in a tavern. I do keep as gallant and as good company, though I say it, as any she in London.

> ...Nay, though my husband be a citizen and's cap's
> made of wool, yet I ha' wit and can see my good as soon as
> another; for I have all the thanks.
> (III.iii.16-18,24-6)

These words are reminiscent of the hidden boasting in Simon Eyre's own declaration of his humble origins, "Prince am I none, yet am I/ princely born" (III.iii.17-18) or of his virtue, "Prince am I none, yet bear a princely mind" (V.ii.20). While Simon's self-pride is concealed within his cheerful demeanor, Mistress Mulligrub is gulled into giving up silver plate and salmon because of her eagerness to participate in a dinner whose purpose was to mark the purchase of the silver bowl--and thereby note the Mulligrub's wealth. As Simon and Margery advance up the social ladder with the God-speed of a happy ending, the Mulligrubs are derided and castigated for their ambitions.

We need only turn to A Chaste Maid in Cheapside to once again see the elements in The Shoemaker's Holiday represented in the extreme--in this case, the Yellowhammers' commerical enterprise of exchanging their daughter for advanced social standing. The goldsmith's trade is not really a focal point in this comedy, since Yellowhammer's ambition will be realized through his child. Maudlin is her husband's partner and wholeheartedly joins in working towards their goal. She berates Moll into improving her skills in music and dancing as she might urge an apprentice to do more hammering. As she tries to goad her daughter into accepting the arranged marriage, it is apparent that, like Margery, she knows the dual roles of consort and subject as she scolds,

> Yes, you are a dull maid alate, methinks you had need have
> somewhat to quicken your green sickness; do you weep? A
> husband. Had not such a piece of flesh been ordained, what
> had us wives been good for? To make salads, or else cried up
> and down for sampire. (I.i.3-7)

As the Yellowhammers eagerly observe Sir Walter's attentions to the unwilling Moll, their aims are even more elevated as they agree to Sir Walter's suggestion that his Welsh niece should marry the Yellowhammers'son Tim, to even more firmly join the families.

Later, fear of Moll's anticipated death reveals just how base the Yellowhammers are in their scheming. As they wait for word they accuse each other of mishandling Moll's discipline, while Mr. Yellowhammer's concern is that her death, in the eyes of the world, "Twill be our shame then." Further in the scene, when Moll feigns death, the couple's first concern is to avoid social censure. Yellowhammer warns,

> All the whole street will hate us, and the world
> Point me out cruel: it is our best course wife,
> After we have given order for the funeral,
> To absent ourselves, till she be laid in ground. (V.ii.108-11)

They decide to "go to some private church,/ And marry Tim to the rich Brecknock [Welsh] gentlewoman." Maudlin, the true consort in ambition, does not grieve for her daughter but declares, "Mass a match,/We'll not lose all at once, somewhat we'll catch" (V.ii.115-16). Tim's marriage does take place, but since the Welsh gentlewoman is actually another of Sir Walter's whores, the family name is stained, not elevated, by this marriage.

The fact that the Yellowhammers disregard their children but maintain an intense concern for their neighbors' good opinion, adds even greater irony to the festive scene at the end of the play. The "bargain" wedding feast will not so much celebrate the social harmony of new marriage, but the relief the older couple feels in having escaped social condemnation.

Conclusion

Only fourteen years separated the appearence of The Shoemaker's Holiday and A Chaste Maid in Cheapside yet, upon first reading, the plays seem to be almost from different eras: life that seems light-hearted and innocent in 1599 turns perverse and cruel a few years later. Upon closer reading, however, it becomes clear that The Shoemaker's Holiday contains all the serious social conflicts that are ridiculed or openly criticized in the later city comedies. Issues of money, class, war and marriage abound within The Shoemaker's Holiday, but are masked in the guise of good natured merriment.

Dekker's tableau of Tudor England places Simon Eyre on center stage to genially take on the world. From his attempts to rescind Ralph's conscription to the great banquet for his apprentices, Simon's actions point to his benevolence. But upon closer scrunity, they also point to his ambition. He demands a return from his apprentices for the "bounty" of his protection; he seizes the opportunity to gain from another merchant's loss of the Dutch cargo; and he shrewdly uses his sovereign's good will to negotiate better trade days. These actions reveal a character as profit motivated as he is cheerful. One feels other capitalists in the later plays, such as Candido, Mulligrub and Yellowhammer, would applaud Simon's business acumen. While

their tactics might be different from Simon's, their ambitions are not.

The stories of Ralph and Jane and Lacy and Rose provide additional happy endings to The Shoemaker's Holiday in the presentation of young love. Viewed from afar, the picture of love overcoming all odds is joyous and just--until we realize that the odds have been very different for the two couples. Ralph and Jane have had poverty, degradation and even death threatening to keep them apart. Lacy and Rose have had wealth and social standing to help bring them together. Jane, Franceschina and Bellafront share the same vulnerablitiy of being viewed as commodities, while Beatrice and Rose, because of class distinctions are afforded some protection.

The domestic happiness of the Eyres is presented in their raucous speech and mutual joy at Simon's elevation to Sheriff and then Lord Mayor. What is also present, however, is the domination of Margery that undermines the idea of a true marital partnership. As are Epiocene, Viola and Mistress Yellowhammer, Margery is both business partner and spouse and as such, she remains subservient to her husband as she gains status.

Dekker presented his audience--and the modern reader--with a picture of Tudor society. It is not the intent of this study, nor perhaps can it be the goal of any other, to determine to what extent Dekker's audience viewed The Shoemaker's Holiday as their own self-portraits. The uneasy chuckle of an aristocrat or the bitter laugh of a maimed veteran can, after all, only be imagined. What can be acknowledged, however, is that Dekker wrote a play that found popular acceptance, while it also reflected the darker realities of society. Its connection to later, more biting

representations of London life is unmistakable. The Shoemaker's Holiday cannot be viewed as an anomaly of sentiment and congeniality among city comedies. It does not stand alone, but takes its place in the tradition of critically humorous works, albeit, penned with Dekker's lighter touch.

Notes

[1] All lines cited from The Shoemaker's Holiday are from the Palmer edition.

[2] A rich image of festival time is found in Robert Herrick's (1591-1674) poem "The Hock-cart, or Harvest home." The poet describes the shouting, singing and laughter as the "Rurall Younglings" and "Wenches" decorate the Hock-cart with leaves and sheaves of wheat, and go to drink and eat their fill at their Lord's hearth. His closing lines confirm the idea of festival as a respite from work, not a change in the social order:

> And know, besides ye must revoke
> The patient Oxe unto the Yoke,
> And all go back unto the Plough
> And Harrow, (though they'r hang'd up now.)
> And you must know, your Lord's word's true,
> Feed him ye must, whose food fills you.
> And that this pleasure is like raine,
> Not sent ye for to drowne your paine,
> But for to make it spring againe. (47-55)

[3] And, in contrast to Dekker, it was to this reality that Shakespeare spoke through the bitter words of the soldier Pistol in Henry V. A simple tavern keeper, he is tired of the physical hardships of the front, hardened by the hanging of his friend, Bardolph, and dejected at the news of his wife's death. Pistol has not been physicaly wounded and yet his contemptuousness is in sharp contrast to Ralph's acquiescence to fate as he vows:

> Well, bawd I'll turn,
> And something lean to cutpurse of quick hand.
> To England will I steal, and there I'll steal.
> And patches will I get unto these cudgeled
> scars,
> And swear I go them in the Gallia wars.
> (V.ii.90-2)

Ralph's quiet resumption of the shoemaker's trade denies the rage of Pistol's vindictive declaration to use deceit and thievery to be repaid for his suffering.

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